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Once we come to terms with the notion that our thinking and actions may be marred by negativity , we should not allow this problem to go unresolved. Let's look at an example from the animal kingdom, that of the honeybee. Consider how it extracts nectar from flowers and how it wings its way, without once stopping, to a multitude of gardens, and then unerringly lands on the flower of its choice.

Of course, there are always thorns in plenty in the path of the honeybee. But adroitly steering clear of them, the honeybee gently alights on the flower its pre-determined destination. We have to reflect on how it finds its way to the flower, how it poises itself above it and how assiduously and devotedly it extracts the nectar! Also worthy of reflection is how, having completed its task, the honeybee does not waste a single moment. Flying straight back to the beehive, it deposits its share of honey. To be able do this, the honeybee has to be totally focussed on its task. It is only fitting that we should learn a lesson from the honeybee in being diligent and persevering and never swerve from the pursuit of our goals. The Creator has sent us to Earth, not without purpose, but to strive towards the perfection of our spiritual personality .Moreover, we must remain fully aware of how the Creator expects us to exhibit an extraordinary spirit in extracting spiritual nourishment from both good and bad experiences. We must never lose sight of the fact that, whatever our mission, we must stay fully focussed. Our path, of course, is strewn with distractions and it is all too natural that we should be tempted at times to pay undue attention to them. But the Creator uses these distractions to test us on our ability to remain patient, to be compassionate, and to give up being vengeful. In eschewing vengeance, we beat back negativity , we steer clear of unsavoury incidents, and, rising above petty vendetta, we are able to forgive others their follies. In so doing we enhance our own spiritual personality , and ensure that we get closer to Paradise.

Negative experiences are a challenge to test us on our reactions in extraordinary , provocative situations because the purpose of the test cannot be served in normal situations. What we are being tested on is how patient, forbearing, compassionate we are.

Faith in the Almighty at every step, shrugging off falsehoods, remaining firm in carrying out our civic and religious responsibilities, and the exercise of restraint in the face of provocation are all virtues that show that we have been continually receiving spiritual sustenance.

This spiritual goal of Islam of attaining a state of peace has been expressed in the Quran in these words: 'A soul at peace' (89:27). According to the Quran this is the ultimate stage in a person's spiritual development. When he reaches this stage, he qualifies to be ushered into Paradise, the perfect and eternal world of the Hereafter. The Quran addresses such souls in these words: 'O serene soul! Return to your Lord, joyful, and pleasing in His sight. Join My servants and enter My paradise' (89:27-30).

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